has been provided to Government of Gujarat to set up Bio-fertilizer by M/s. Gujarat State Co-operative Marketing Federation, M/s. Gujarat State Fertilizer Company Ltd. and M/s. Krishak Bharti Co-operative Ltd. ICAR has identified suitable strains of Rhizobium for different pulses and oilseeds Corp. Mother culture has been supplied to the production units under State Government/Private Sector Agencies.

Cultivation of plants restricted for export

3965. SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many of the 56 plants which have been restricted for exports without production of Certificate of Cultivation as per Public Notice 47 (PN) 92—97, Ministry of Commerce with effect from 25th March, 1996, are being cultivated in a large scale in many States;

(b) whether any statistics had been collected by the Ministry about the area of cultivation and availability of the individual plants before recommending issue of the Notification; and

(c) if so, whether the above statistical information will be made available for the perusal of the Members?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) and (b) The ban on export of 56 plant species and their parts and products has been imposed due to their declining status in the wild. However, if these plants are of cultivated origin, their export is permissible, subject to production of relevant documentation. Statistics about the cultivation and availability of these plants have not been collected by this Ministry, but it is hoped that this regulation will encourage their cultivation.

(c) Does not arise.

Announcement of purchase price of Wheat, Rice and other cereals

3966. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced the purchase price of wheat, rice and other cereals recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the criteria/basis therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) The per Qtl. Minimum Support Prices recently announced by Government are Rs. 380 for paddy (common), Rs. 395 for paddy (fine), Rs. 415 for paddy (superfine), Rs. 310 for coarse cereals (Jowar, bajra and ragi) and Rs. 320 for maize for the 1996-97 season. The Minimum Support Price announced earlier for wheat and barley by the Government is Rs. 380 per qtl. and Rs. 295 per qtl. respectively for the marketing season 1996-97.

(c) The Minimum Support Prices have been announced by taking into consideration the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices, the views of the State Governments and concerned Central Ministries and other relevant factors.

Inclusion of Farmers in Crop Insurance Scheme

3967. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are proposing to cover the farmers, other than the loanees, under the Crop Insurance Scheme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A proposal to modify the

existing Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme (CCIS) which among other things includes the issue of coverage of non-loanee farmers is presently under the consideration of the Government. A Concept Paper about various suggestions for revision of the scheme has been circulated to all the Hon'ble Members of the Parliament. A formal proposal for the revision will be prepared after receiving the views from the Hon'ble Members.

Higher Cost of Imported Urea

3968. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cost of the imported urea is higher by Rs. 4,000/- per ton than the one produced indigenously;

(b) whether the production of urea in the country can be increased by 13 lakh tonnes if the sick fertilizer plants are made operational by spending some one thousand crores of rupees;

(c) if so, whether Government are considering any proposal to remove the sickness of the fertilizer plants to achieve self-sufficiency and to lessen dependence on foreign countries; and

(d) whether due to shortage of urea and production of foodgrains has declined?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS & FERTILIZERS (SHRI SHEES RAM OLA): (a) During 1995-96, the estimated average farm-gate cost of imported urea was higher by Rs. 3624 per tonne than the weighted average farm-gate cost of indigenous urea.

(b) and (c) Of the eight fertilizer producing Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and two Cooperative Societies under the administrative control of this Ministry, two PSUs, *viz.* Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Limited (HFC) and Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited (FCI) were declared sick by the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) in November, 1992.

The revival packages for HFC and FCI approved in principle by the Government in April, 1995 envisaged the revamp of Barauni, Durgapur and Namrup units of HFC; and Sindri, Ramagundam and Talcher units of FCI at a fresh investment of Rs. 2201.13 crore (Rs. 464.93 crore for HFC and Rs. 1736.20 crore for FCI), at 1994 price levels, apart from other financial reliefs to these undertakings. The funding arrangement for these packages could, however, not be tied up.

In order to minimise the requirement of budgetary support for the rehabilitation of HFC & FCI, an Expert Group has been constituted to reformulate the revival packages from the standpoint of funding by the financial Institutions. The final revival packages would also require the approval of the BIFR, which is a quasi-judicial authority. On implementation of the revival packages, these companies would be able to sustain a production capacity of 23 lakh MT of urea per annum.

(d) The availability of urea has been comfortable and there has been no shortage of the fertilizer.

Change in Land Use

3969. DR. B. B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how much area of land is under cultivation of foodgrains and cash crops, separately;

(b) how this compares with the area during 1960, 1970 and 1980;

(c) whether there has been change in the land use from foodgrains to cash crops;

(d) if so, the magnitude of such change during the last fifteen years as far as wheat and coarse grains are concerned;

(e) whether Government have any strategy to stop this trend; and